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PRESENTATION  
OF THE  
ROYAL AWARDS.

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THE Founder's Gold Medal to Captain T. G. MONTGOMERIE, for his great trigonometrical survey from the plains of the Panjab to the Karakoram Range, embracing an area of 56,000 square miles, during which observations were taken at upwards of 20,000 feet above the sea, and the height fixed of the second highest known mountain in the world. The Patron's or Victoria Gold Medal to Mr. SAMUEL W. BAKER, for his vigorous explorations, entirely at his own cost, in the interior of Africa, whereby he first determined the course and position of various affluents of the Atbara; next, for having fitted out at Khartum an expedition, by which he relieved Speke and Grant; and thirdly, for his noble endeavour to complete the discoveries of those travellers by the further exploration of Equatorial Africa, in which he is still engaged.

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The awards having been read, the PRESIDENT thus addressed the recipients of the Medals :—

“ CAPTAIN MONTGOMERIE,

“ As I have for many years felt deeply interested in every effort to develope the physical geography of the Himalaya Mountains, so was I highly gratified, when, at the recommendation of your former able leader Sir Andrew Waugh, the Council awarded to you our Founder's Medal.

“ When we reflected upon the remarkable facts, that you had passed from the hot plains of Hindostan to the loftiest region on the face of the globe, and that there, amidst enormous glaciers, you had made accurate scientific observations at stations one of which was five thousand feet higher than the summit of Mont Blanc, we could not fail to applaud and reward such noble feats, displaying as they did the great abilities and energy with which you conducted so arduous a survey.

“ Accept, then, this Medal as a testimony of the admiration with which the Royal Geographical Society contemplates such deeds, and be assured that in our body no one more truly rejoices than myself in seeing you thus rewarded.”

Captain MONTGOMERIE replied :

“ Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I came here totally unprepared to return thanks on this great occasion, but I find it is required by the forms of the Society that I should do so. Therefore, I beg to return my sincere thanks for the great honour that has been done through me to the particular portion of the Trigonometrical Survey of which I had the honour of having the charge. At the same time I beg you will understand that I accept this Medal as a reward for the services of those who have worked with me, and who have undergone all the hardships. I would more especially name Captain Godwin-Austen, Captain Melville, Messrs. Johnson and Beverly, and many others whose names are printed in the Reports of the Trigonometrical Survey. They have one and all assisted me; they have gone with me through all the various difficult tasks that we have had to perform ; they have ascended glaciers, encamped on peaks, and gone through every hardship that they could possibly be expected to encounter, with great zeal and cheerfulness. It is exceedingly gratifying, I hope, to them that their services should have been in some way recognized by my receiving a Medal from this learned Society, especially chartered to decide upon Geographical subjects. The Survey has been carried on from year to year. It was at first designed by Sir Andrew Waugh ; the party was organised and it has been superintended and directed by him during the most arduous years in which it was in progress ; and without his constant support and kindness we should never have been able to carry the work as we have done up to the borders of Kurdistan.”

Next, addressing Mr. John Baker, the brother of the recipient of the Victoria or Patron’s Medal, the President thus spoke :—

“ Mr. JOHN BAKER,

“ You have great reason to be proud of being the brother of a man, who by his self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of Exploration of unknown countries, has justly obtained the Patron’s Medal of the Royal Geographical Society.

“ The author of ‘The Rifle and the Hound’ long ago gave earnest that the same adventurous spirit which led him in pursuit of wild animals into the fastnesses of India, would afterwards lead him to undertake grander excursions in the character of a true scientific explorer.

“ To say nothing of the discoveries of Samuel Baker on the banks of the affluents of the Atbara, a grand tributary of the Nile ; I never was more penetrated with a feeling of admiration than when I heard of his spontaneous exertions to fit out an expedition at Khartum, to meet and relieve Speke and Grant, in the belief that our envoy, Mr. Petherick, had encountered disasters which must prevent him from reaching those travellers. Still more did my estimate of the high qualities of your brother rise, when I heard that after relieving his friends he had advanced, despite of all obstacles, into the heart

of Equatorial Africa, there to work out the details of the great problem which Speke and Grant had in great measure solved.

"Anxiously hoping that your brother may ere long return to England laden with fresh trophies, to the prospect of which I shall allude in the course of my coming Address, I beg to present to you in the mean time this our Victoria Medal as a token of our high appreciation of the devoted and chivalrous services of Samuel Baker."

Mr. BAKER then replied :—

"Sir Roderick Murchison,—I beg to thank you for the very flattering manner in which you have alluded to my brother. It gives me great pleasure to attend here to-day on his behalf, and receive this Medal which you have so kindly awarded to him. The only drawback to my pleasure on this occasion is that my brother is not here to thank you in person for the honour you have conferred upon him. I cannot help feeling anxious at his long-continued absence, and can only earnestly hope for his safe and speedy return; and whilst thanking you very much for the honour you have done him in presenting him with so distinguished a mark of your approbation, I look forward to the great pleasure it will afford him when I can present it to him in person."

After the presentation of the Royal Medals, the PRESIDENT delivered a Testimonial, value 40*l.*, to Dr. ARMINIUS VÁMBÉRY, addressing him in these words :—

"M. VÁMBÉRY,

"On the part of the Council, and in the name of the Royal Geographical Society, I hand to you this honorific donation, as a token of our regard and of the high estimation in which we hold your adventurous journey into Central Asia. Admiring the self-reliance, courage, and perseverance which enabled you to penetrate from Khiva through the deserts of the Oxus, and to obtain the notice of the Khan of Bokhara amidst the palaces of Samarkand, we well know that you never could have made the journey had you not qualified yourself, by long preparation and study, to travel in the character and guise of a holy Dervish.

"But our wonder at your successful journey, when first related to us, was modified when we found that you possessed such a marked power of fascinating all those with whom you are brought into contact; and we now understand how the Dervish had his own passport in his hands.

"Earnestly hoping that your attractive and interesting volume will be largely bought by the public, all Philologists should be proud of the spirit which led you, as a Hungarian, to overcome such appalling difficulties in your desire to trace out the root of your own dear Magyar tongue among the natives of the East. Pray receive this purse as the price of so many copies of your excellent work."

Dr. VÁMBÉRY replied as follows:—

“ Mr. President and Gentlemen,—When last year I had the honour of addressing this Society, I could not do it as I wished, because I was then but a half-civilised man. Coming back from Tartary, and having become myself half a Tartar and Dervish for many years, on arriving in the wonderful metropolis of the still more wonderful English nation, I found I had but little knowledge of the language, and was unable to express myself. But now, after having passed one year in England, I can say that I am a little more civilised, not totally, but sufficiently civilised to express my deepest thanks to this Society for the honour and the kindness it has bestowed upon me. Before all, I must acknowledge the kindness with which I was recommended by the Society in England. The reception and hospitality I have met with here, which I shall never forget, and which never could be forgotten by any foreigner in England, is entirely owing to the recommendation of the Royal Geographical Society.”

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NOTE.—Mr. Petherick, lately H.M.’s Vice-Consul at Khartum, who had just returned to England, having expressed his opinion at the last Anniversary Meeting, that the terms of the award of the Patron’s Medal to Mr. Samuel Baker might seem to throw discredit on him for not having performed his engagement, by succouring Speke and Grant, it is my duty to repeat what I said at the meeting, that on this point Mr. Petherick had quite misconstrued the meaning of the words used by the Council.

In their award of a medal to Mr. S. Baker, they dwelt solely on his motives and deeds at a time when he knew that Mr. Petherick had met with heavy disasters in the region to the west of the White Nile, which must, he thought, prevent Mr. Petherick from going southwards to the relief of the travellers.

This, in truth, was my own conviction when I penned my Address of 1863. Mr. Petherick has now transmitted a letter to the President and Council, calling for some recognition of his services, and that subject is under the consideration of the Council.

RODERICK I. MURCHISON.

June 13th, 1865.